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TREASURER FONG UNVEILS SAVE-AT-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Fong visits North Highlands school on National Teach Children to Save Day

(SACRAMENTO) -- State Treasurer Matt Fong Thursday launched his new "Save-At-School" program designed for elementary school students to learn money management skills while they save. Today's event, which coincided with "National Teach Children to Save Day," will be followed by a Southern California kickoff in Walnut Friday.

Treasurer Fong was joined at Oak Hill Elementary School in North Highlands by roughly 400 students, parents and faculty of the Center Unified School District as well as officials from Union Bank to unveil the program. Fong's pilot program allows students from participating schools to open savings accounts with community-based banks and participate in a curriculum designed to teach sound financial skills. Fong unveiled his program on the American Bankers Association's National Teach Children to Save Day, in honor of which bankers across the country visited schools to preach the value of savings.

"Above all else, education means preparing students for the challenges they will face in life. Personal savings levels have dropped to their lowest point since the Depression. This is a serious problem, and we have to teach the next generation how to overcome it," Fong said. "The Save-at-School program is a practical, hands-on way we can do that."

The program is centered around a 12-lesson teaching manual designed for use as a guide for participating educators. After the course, students will be able to determine an income, make consumer choices, plan a budget and pay bills. The curriculum activities are divided into six categories: math; social studies and history; science; computers; creative arts, including art and drama; and language arts, which includes writing and reading. The program is designed to provide flexibility to teachers by allowing them to select information from the manual as it seems appropriate for their classes.

Fong's goals for the Save-at-School program include promoting proper financial habits and the concept of savings, expanding students' access to savings accounts, developing problem-solving skills and combining the resources of the Treasurer's office, educators, business and the financial community in making new programs available to students.